



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Galveston District

2000 Fort Point Road  
P.O. Box 1229  
Galveston, Texas 77553-1229

# News Release

Public Affairs Office

Phyllis Bledsoe  
Marilyn Uhrich  
Michele Casteline

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Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone: (409) 766-3004

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## District to hold ribbon-cutting ceremony for J.J. Mayes Wildlife Trace

The Galveston District, US Army Corps of Engineers, opens the J.J. Mayes Wildlife Trace, a new birding trail with a ribbon-cutting ceremony May 1 at the Wallisville Project. The public is invited to attend. The ribbon cutting ceremony will coincide with Texas Parks and Wildlife's Great Texas Birding Classic giving visitors an opportunity to view a variety of birds, turtles, raccoons, and the occasional alligator.

The ceremony will kick-off at 10:00 a.m. with an invocation by Rev. Wayne Hargraves. Emcee and introductions will be given by district clerk, Bobby Scherer. Commissioner Judy Edmonds is speaking at the ceremony. Speaking on behalf of the Mayes family will be John Middleton and Tommy Willcox.

If driving from Houston the ceremony is off Interstate 10, just after mile marker 805 and before the Trinity River Bridge. The sign reads Trinity River boat ramp (colored brown), along with a Turnaround sign (colored green). If you are traveling from Beaumont, the exit is just after mile marker 806.

The J.J. Mayes Wildlife Trace is an area set aside at the Wallisville Lake Project where both the casual and experienced nature observer can get as close to nature as he or she may desire. Located south of Interstate 10 on the west bank of the Trinity River in Chambers County, the JJ Mayes Wildlife Trace uses a mixture of the old and new to create a complex of roads, trails, boardwalks and picnic facilities designed to allow for a close-up view of both marsh and riparian habitats located along the river.

The heart of the complex is 4-mile nature trail located along the top of a levee. It gives observers a birds-eye view of the marsh area as they drive along at an elevation of about 10-feet above the surrounding marsh. This auto/nature trail is anchored by a small picnic area located under a grove of large, historic oak trees just south of I-10. It is supported by three trail-head parking areas providing access to approximately three miles of trails. A 2.5-mile trail follows an old road along the banks of the Trinity River through beautiful riparian habitat. The middle portion of the trail is paved and is part of a .8-mile handicapped accessible loop trail containing over 1,000 feet of board walk only a few feet above the marsh. Observation decks overlooking the Trinity River and the marsh are also provided. In addition, a small pavilion and restroom are near the Wallisville Navigation Lock at south end of the auto/nature trail.

Wildlife abounds throughout the area. For the wary observer, a number of mammals that inhabit the area can be seen. These include raccoons, opossums, river otters, bobcats and coyotes.

Reptiles also abound in the area including a large variety of snakes and turtles and, of course, the American alligator. Birds are the big draw to this area. The bird life changes with the season. In the spring and fall, migrating song-birds are common along the trails. In the winter, the area is home to a large variety of ducks and geese. Waders can be seen year round in the marshes and along the stream. Other birds also call this area home at different times of the year. This includes both white and brown pelicans and a large variety of raptors including ospreys and an occasional bald eagle.